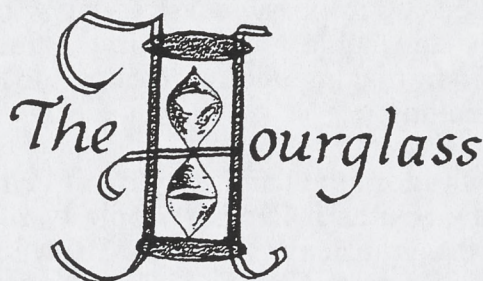


Historical Society of Palm Desert

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Community

Service

Collections

Archives

SUMMER 2000

VOL. 8, NO. 2

SPRING LUNCHEON Valley History with that Frank Bogert Flair

President Dan Callahan opened the meeting at noon after members and guests enjoyed an hour of good fellowship. Fern Stout offered an invocation and all enjoyed a great prime rib meal. Held at Desert Falls Country Club on Wednesday, May 3, this event afforded an opportunity to get acquainted and do some reminiscing. New members and special guests were recognized individually and welcomed.

Ginny Folkers gave the nominating report, beginning with thanks to her committee: Theda Lundquist, Ginny Mullins (our constant reminder of Ed's past nurturing of the Society), Mary Safe, and Joyce White (who has volunteered to learn the preservation process for the archives.) The following people have been elected and will be installed at the October luncheon:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • President: Ginny Folkers | • Secretary: Bonnie Bowie | • Past President: |
| • Vice-President: Roger Keezer | • Treasurer: Bob Wilmeth | Dan Callahan |

Board of Directors:

Caroline Berkey	Bruce Hagerman	Ginny Mullins	Walter Snyder
Barbara Keedy Eastes	Dan Kelly	Gary Olesen	Joyce White
Jean Ernst	Loraine Vallat Meyer	Hal Rover	

Retiring Board Members:

Doloris Driskel	Jean Hollenbeck	Theda Lundquist	Mary Safe
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Committee Recommendations:

Dan Callahan be given the title of Ambassador of Good Will
Doloris Driskel retain the position of liaison to the City's Art Committee
Theda Lundquist act as consultant to new Hourglass editor, Ginny Folkers

Mary Safe received a round of applause for organizing the luncheon. She announced the upcoming Founder's Day, and mentioned the Society's acquisition of an old John Hilton painting. Safe and Caroline Berkey traveled to Frank Bogert's home in Palm Springs to pick up an autographed copy of his book "Palm Springs: the First Hundred Years." Mary said she first saw Mr. Bogert dressed in cowboy hat and boots at Marian Henderson's "Desert Beautiful" meeting held at Smoke Tree Ranch. His home reminds her of a museum, filled with mementos and art treasures. Mayor, cowboy, pioneer, legend, straight-talking, salty humored, hard riding, and community minded "Mr. Palm Springs" was warmly welcomed.

Starting out, he said he hoped we had lots of questions because he didn't have much to talk about -- that was an understatement! Why were some of the men wearing coats and ties in this hot Palm Desert country?... he wanted to know. Palm Springs men wear T-shirts.

Bogert first came to the valley as a kid with a friend in 1927, so he has been here for 73 years. They were driving 60 horses from up north, where their former employer had died and left the herd to them. This would have been an impossible task today with the freeways and heavy development. After building a small house and stable, they were in the dude ranch business. Charging \$1.00 for an hour of riding, they were soon making enough money for Frank to attend UCLA during the week and work the ranch on weekends.

Publicity for the El Mirador Hotel and the City of Palm Springs was his next venture. Abetted by Western Airlines and the Southern Pacific, people were lured from their snowy abodes to the sunny pool sides in the desert. Frank says, "This put Palm Springs on the map." Then he took a two-year job as manager of the Racquet Club. He gives credit to Samuel Untermeyer, who was the Secretary of the Treasury at the time, for bringing the first wealthy residents to the area. It was only in 1934 when Charlie Farrell took over the Racquet Club that Hollywood stars came on the scene. Since movie producers and directors frequented the club, pretty little girls in bathing suits would sit around the pool hoping to be noticed. Marilyn Monroe got her first contract there.

When Bogert went into the navy, he was appointed aide to an Admiral. He helped a young kid get transferred to a post in which he would not see action. The young man's father, who owned a candy company in San Francisco, offered to finance Bogert in any venture he chose when he was released from service. Frank came back to Palm Springs and bought Section 11, which was 750 acres. Then, with \$34,000 raised through San Francisco backers, he purchased the Thunderbird Ranch from Ray Cree and transformed it into a dude ranch. This eventually became the country club we know today in Rancho Mirage. It was the first golf course in the country to feature home sites all around its perimeter. Men like Gordon Kaufman, Barney Hinkle and Johnny Dawson made it a reality, and stars like Bing Crosby and Bob Hope made it a success.

Tuberculosis was really what started Palm Springs. Because his son had the disease, Judge McCallum bought 6000 acres from the railroad at 50¢ an acre. After installing a water system, he subdivided and sold acreage to farmers. As luck would have it, in 1908 it rained for 20 days straight, flooded the whole valley, and a drought followed on its heels. Farmers sold and moved out before they could even get the pipes cleaned out.

Bogert admitted to being a chauvinist who always thought a woman's place was in the kitchen. Giving credit where it is due, he said most of the businesses and innovative ideas which made Palm Springs a great resort were started and directed by women. "Sad case," he commented, somewhat under his breath. Frank mentioned Nellie Coffman, Zaddie Bunker, the White sisters, Ruth Hardy and Melba Bennett as enterprising pioneers of the past.

An authority on all sorts of things, Bogert answered questions about Desert Circus, Jimmy Hines, Fig Tree John, the Golden Checkerboard, Indian casinos, early gambling, and bighorn sheep. Everyone enjoyed this history lesson from someone who's lived it. Mr. Bogert has one of those "they broke the mold" type personalities.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. George Graziadio *Life*
Reed & Nan Harman *Life*

Terry Anderson
Ann Bonesteel
Louis Conconi
Judy Conley
Ann Copeland

David & Travis Erwin
Richard & Catherine Miller
Josephine Stelle
Dick & Patty Coffin

Eloise Gunn
Sadie Henry
Wynema King
Lorna Little
Yvonne Kelley

IN MEMORIAM

Celia Dunn
Joseph LoPresti
Mary Valdora
Daisy Whyte

FOUNDER'S DAY Harold & Millie Bird Honored

As usual, May 15th found us gathering to recognize a deserving person(s) who exemplify the kind of community spirit Cliff Henderson would have admired. At 3:00 guests began to arrive and enjoy the cookies and punch set up by the event chairman, Jean Hollenbeck. A flute duet by College of the Desert students, Larea Lewis and Tracy Melon, accompanied the chatter that happens wherever people congregate. Prominently displayed was the huge trophy with names of past recipients, surrounded by interesting mementos and posters of the honorees' life and work.

The official ceremony began at 4:00 with President Dan Callahan's welcome. Marian Henderson, Cliff's widow, took her place at the podium and presented a plaque to the Birds. "Cliff always wanted to give people things, to recognize them for their efforts; then they can build on that," she said. Marian thanked Harold and Millie for their service to the community.

Harold was born in a quiet little New Jersey village named Pluckemin. Educated in Somerville, he graduated high school in 1939 with his main goal being chemistry. He loved the big band sound of that era; also, he became an assistant scoutmaster. Harold attended Rutgers University and during World War II he worked at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C.

In the capitol city he met Millie at a church social and asked her, "Do you dance?" That started a relationship that has weathered 55 years since their Nov. 19, 1945 wedding. After 15 months he was discharged from the navy. Steve was born in 1948, and Harold got his M.S. in Biochemistry from Purdue University the following year.

While developing new antibiotics at Eli Lilly & Company for 15 years, Nancy was born in 1952. For 3 years he taught at Longwood College in Virginia, then at University of Arizona where he published a lab manual in 1974.

At College of the Desert he became a Professor of Chemistry in 1974 and retired in 1984, spending six more years on the adjunct faculty. Harold was a travel agent for 15 years, has worked 16 years on the Friends of C.O.D. book sales, and does bookbinding with Millie. People ask him, "When are you going to retire?"

Millie is grateful for the quality of life provided by this area since they took up residence 25 years ago. Both their children live in California now. She is very involved with C.O.D. Friends of the Library.

Encouraged to read by her parents and grandparents, Millie loved books and libraries as a child. She would walk five blocks to the Library of Congress and sixteen blocks to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D. C.

After 18 years as a home maker, choir singer, scout leader, etc. she became a library assistant in Indianapolis. Later she learned bindery preparation at the University of Arizona library.

In Palm Desert there were no library jobs open. Someone told her, "You should meet Theda Simpson. Here's her number." That's how she got involved with fund-raising for the C.O.D. library through the used book sales. Bernice Lofland, who had been Palm Desert's first librarian in the little library on the frontage road, joined the Friends committee for book pricing. She had been a bookbinder (was Millie's first teacher) and her husband owned a book store on 6th Avenue in Los Angeles. Soon the funds raised at "Twice Told Tales" sales increased. They have made as much as \$16,000 at one sale.

Meanwhile, Millie started to set up a book-binding workshop in their home and took workshops to learn as much as she could. Friends' lunches provided ways to meet famous authors, do programs for children, participate in the golf cart parade, etc. Her hobbies are travel, operatic music, decorating eggs, and M-A-S-H.

HUELL HOWSER with Dan Callahan & Mayor Crites put Palm Desert on T.V.

Did you see this delightful tour of our fair city on television? Beginning with the Gardens on El Paseo, Dan gave historic background as he showed Huell around. They visited Society headquarters, our old fire station on El Paseo. The next stop was the picturesque house on Cook Street, which was originally built by the Cavanaugh brothers and is now owned by the Huttons. Mayor Buford Crites joined them as they showed the T.V. audience Desert Willow Golf Course and the new club house. As Councilwoman Jean Benson said, "It certainly was a good overview of Palm Desert -- past, present and future."

GINNY MULLINS

Ginny was born on August 31, 1929 to Reuben and Juanita Lopez in Los Angeles. Virginia was the youngest of three children following Bob and Connie. Juanita worked as a seamstress and Reuben died when Ginny was a baby. After going through elementary school, she entered Hollywood High School and upon graduation attended Los Angeles Community College.

She met Nick Licari and during their 25-year marriage they had five sons. In 1966-67 Ginny was named "Mrs. Chamber of Commerce" in La Mirada and "Miss Hospitality" of Alpha Beta.

When she came to the desert, Ginny worked as a bookkeeper and checker for Dee Smith of Smith's Food King. Then she started dating "Mr. Palm Desert", Ed Mullins, who owned Mullin's Pharmacy and was very active in the community. They married and had a happy ten years until Ed died on April 26, 1997.

Currently, Ginny's main interest is in her grandchildren.....there are 14 of them, plus 2 great grandchildren. She also enjoys knitting, reading, and tennis when she can find a partner. Volunteer work keeps her busy, having helped out at Martha's Kitchen in the past and presently she gives one day a week to the Betty Ford Center. She is a life member of St. Francis of Assisi Women's Guild and she attends Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Palm Desert.

A member of the Board for the Historical Society, Ginny has agreed to take on the position of Membership Chairman. Her sweet personality makes her everyone's friend, and her presence is a constant reminder of the enthusiasm and hard work her late husband invested in the Society.

WASHINGTON CHARTER SCHOOL
1950 to 2000

The 50th anniversary celebration was a delightful array of parents, teachers, guests, and children dressed in the 50's style on the school's playground. The students sang and danced, all in the memorable style of that era when the school on Portola Avenue was known simply as Palm Desert School.

Dr. Doris Wilson began teaching at George Washington Elementary School on 2-19-69. At the time there were only 8000 children and 9 schools in the Desert Sands Unified School District, with only Washington and Lincoln being in Palm Desert. Now there are 23,000 students and 24 schools.

Gary Olesen was in the 8th grade when the school opened in September of 1949. There were 10 classes in two rectangular buildings. It was the first satellite of the Indio School District. When their class of thirteen graduated in May 1950, Cliff Henderson (who originally donated the land for the school) gave each of them a map of the Coachella Valley titled "In the Palm of God's Hand."

Mary Bono and Jim Battin sent a national and a state flag. City Councilman Bob Spiegel presented a proclamation and announced that the city had allocated \$400,000 for renovation of the park and playground area and for additional parking on Lantana.

Carole Horlock was a past principal of the school. In her 38-year teaching career, she made friends, got a warm family feeling, and a collection of T-shirts that marked changes chartering was a good change. History is relevant -- grandparents and parents were also students here. Commitment, accountability, involvement equals success.

It's all about home, school and community working together. Principal Allan Lehmann expressed his appreciation to co-chairs Jeanette Granik and Cindy Valley and all those who worked so hard to make the event a success. Students and their music teacher worked 8-9 months to choreograph the singing and dancing. The whole party was topped off with 600 "In-N-Out" burgers.

Members Travel

- Helene Smith and her San Francisco granddaughter recently visited Austria.
- Florence Holdsworth and Jeanette Yoxsimer will see the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany in June.
- To celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, Dick and Ginny Folkers are planning a European trip this summer.

AWARDS GIVEN TO OUR MEMBERS

City of Palm Desert

Nominated by Tom Bassler of the Public Works Department, the city recently received the Clean Cities award for the "Best Public Sector Project." In 1988 five work trucks were converted to propane. The council set an alternative fuel vehicle purchase policy in 1993 to cover the whole fleet in 10 years. This year they anticipate 78% of the 48 vehicle fleet will be operating on alternative fuels, propane, compressed natural gas or electricity. We thank the City for improved air quality in Palm Desert

Doloris Driskel

As Palm Desert's candidate, Doloris received the "Living for Your 90s" award on April 7. Doloris and her late husband, Don, first came to Palm Desert in 1952 on their honeymoon. In 1961 they moved to the area and put down roots, beginning with George Washington Elementary School where their three daughters attended. "Mrs. Santa Claus" still rides in the Golf Cart Parade, and she retired last year after 23 years with the Parks & Recreation Commission. Doloris works part time for the Desert Pages phone book, and is H.S. Board liaison to the City's Art Committee. She's a "Jill of all trades" and we all love her.

Mary Helen Kelly

On April 26 a number of "Service of Love" awards were made by Soroptimist International of Palm Desert. Mary Helen was chosen to receive the International Goodwill and Understanding award. At age ten she had a pen pal in England, a relationship which endured until 1995 when her friend died. At UCLA she studied International Relations. Here in the valley the Kelly's have been involved in the Rotary Exchange Student program and the Sister Cities program, housing people from New Zealand, Australia and England.

Buford Crites

Mid-Valley Interfaith Council gave their "Lights of the Desert" award to Mayor Crites for his environmental influence. Educated in Missouri, Illinois and Utah, he holds degrees in earth science, speech, and information sciences. An avid member of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, he wants to ensure that we retain the "feel" of a California desert. An instructor at the College of the Desert for 24 years, he is the president of the Academic Senate and head of the Communications Division. Crites has also served the community as a member of the Palm Desert City Council since 1986 and is currently the mayor.

Grete Cox

Animal Samaritans awarded Grete their "Compassion Plus Award" for her activities in the organization. She was one of the founding members of Animal Samaritans and she serves as the volunteer clinic director at A.S. headquarters in Thousand Palms. We congratulate Grete for her involvement with our furred, feathered and scaled friends.

Jean Ann Hirschi

ACT for MS (Multiple Sclerosis) gave this award at their "A Crowning Tribute" benefit held at the Ritz-Carlton. Jean Ann is a member of the MS board and is generous to other local charities. She has been a trust attorney in the valley for nearly 40 years. Paralyzed in an auto accident at age 19, she doesn't allow confinement to a wheelchair to hinder her activities. She cherishes her independence and likes to have *FUN*.

Marian Henderson

Friends of the Desert Mountains honored Marian for her dedication to respecting the past and protecting the future. The widow of Cliff Henderson who founded Palm Desert, Marian has made notable achievements in the desert. She founded "Desert Beautiful" and has kept it active 30+ years. Using Harry Oliver as a sort of trade mark, she reminds us to pick up, paint up, fix up, plant flowers and trees, and care about our environment. Besides other community involvement in the past, she continues to initiate projects and make contacts in the Coachella Valley which result in all of us taking pride in this little corner of our world.

DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY ARCHIVES

- Don Olson - Firecliff Lodge menus and mailers, a photo, 60's & 70's
- Roger Keezer - Sommerset Development packet, news items, 79-81
- Jan Holmlund - restaurant menus, Art in Public Places reports, 80's & 90's
- Ironwood Country Club - 25th anniversary book, 99
- Dick Kelly - items from Telephone Company book "Life Lines", 60-61
- Becky Trask - Esther Schaak collection, Cahuilla Hills (470 items processed so far)
- Bette Jean Ames - photos/negatives 78, brochures & postcards, 70's thru 90's
- Virginia Bertling - Erawan Gardens Hotel menu, 62
- Edgar DeForest - speech manuscript, 99
- Ellen Loop - Pictorial California, 58; Resorter, 60

DONATIONS (continued):

- Dan Callahan - 19 news items, 54 thru 99
- Jean Hollenbeck - 9 news items, 75 thru 81
- Shirlee Smith - 1958 Shadow Mountain Golf Club booklet, 99
- Caroline Berkey - issue of Desert Post, 85
- Del Davitt - 14 photos; 2 cards; issue of KGOL Air-News, 65
- Genevieve Burke - 22 news items, 77-98
- Dorothy Schmid (C.V.H.S.) - 2 maps; 1 report; 49 aerial photos, 79-86
- Helen Dengler - 2 letters, 92 & 94
- Wynema King - 3 book on artists & camping

OSCAR HURLEY

With two bus loads of friends, Oscar and June Hurley recently enjoyed lunch and a matinee at 'The Ice House' in Pasadena. The building was one of Oscar's first Southern California construction projects; the playhouse opened 50 years ago.

Oscar hails from Oregon, but became a Coachella Valley pioneer early on. In 1944 Oscar and Betty, his first wife, built the Palm Village Guest Cottages. A 10-unit development on the north side of Hwy. 111, it was one of the first motels in Palm Desert.

Hurley continued his many enterprises in the food, restaurant and hotel supply business in Southern California. In 1957 Oscar associated with Bing Crosby and Phil Harris to establish the first cable television station in the desert, Coachella Valley TV Inc. It subsequently became Abel Cable, later Media One, and now Time Warner. Before being sold to a group of investors, it grew from 6 to 13 channels.

An interview given by Oscar on tape and a transcript are available for use at the Society. Now 90 years of age, his life has been a full, interesting, productive one.

A Coachella Valley History

Guide Dogs of the Desert has hired Bari Nestel to publish a book with pioneers' stories. To participate, call her at 416-1062.

When the poet Longfellow was well along in years, his hair was white, but his cheeks were rosy and he looked healthy and was very vigorous. When one of his admirers asked him how he could be like this and write so beautifully, he pointed to an apple tree which was in full bloom and said, "That apple tree is old, but I have never seen prettier blossoms on it than those it has now. The tree grows a little new wood each year and it is out of that new wood that those blossoms come. Like the apple tree, I try to grow a little new wood each year ." and what Longfellow did, we all should do.

Note from the editors:

Thank you for your participation in the work of the Society during the past year. We appreciate your involvement as a member, in donating items to our collections, and in volunteering your time. This is your organization, and through it you are serving the community.

The Society office will be closed in July and August for the summer, but you can always reach us by leaving a phone message or by mail. Dues are payable April 1st each year, so if you haven't paid yours, please do so.

When we reopen in September, docents, volunteers for special projects and researchers will be needed. Call and tell us how you would like to help. Have a wonderful, safe, healthy and happy summer !!

Ginny Folkers & Theda Lundquist